

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel originally filed Claims 1-21.

Please enter the following Claims:

22/29. (new) A ferrule comprising:

a ferrule body extending lengthwise between opposed front and rear faces to thereby define a longitudinal axis, the ferrule body defining a lengthwise extending bore capable of receiving an end portion of an optical fiber, wherein the front face of the ferrule body includes a ground portion and an unground portion, wherein the bore opens through the ground portion.

Rule 1.034 23/30. (new) The ferrule according to claim 29, further comprising a chamfer adjacent to the front face.

24/31. (new) The ferrule according to claim 29, wherein the ground portion is rearward of the unground portion.

25/32. (new) The ferrule according to claim 29, wherein the unground portion is a plateau.

26/33. (new) The ferrule according to claim 29, wherein a plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

27/34. (new) The ferrule according to claim 33, wherein the plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle of between about 8° and about 12° relative to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

28/35. (new) The ferrule according to claim 29, wherein the unground portion extends across less than 50% of the front face of the ferrule body.

29 ²² 36. (new) The ferrule according to claim ²² 35, wherein said ferrule body includes a chamber and the unground portion is disposed proximate to the chamber of the ferrule body.

30 ³⁷ 37. (new) A ferrule comprising:

a ferrule body extending lengthwise between opposed front and rear faces, the ferrule body having a lengthwise extending bore defining a longitudinal axis, the bore capable of receiving an end portion of an optical fiber, wherein the front face of the ferrule body includes a compound surface having a ground portion and an unground portion, the ground portion having a hemispherical portion through which the bore opens.

31 ³⁸ 38. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁰ 37, further comprising a chamfer adjacent to the front face.

32 ³⁹ 39. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁰ 37, wherein the unground portion is rearward of the ground portion.

33 ⁴⁰ 40. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁰ 37, wherein a plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

34 ⁴¹ 41. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³³ 40, wherein the plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle of between 8° and 12° relative to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

35 ⁴² 42. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁰ 37, wherein the unground portion extends across less than 50% of the front face of the ferrule body.

- 38/43. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁷43, wherein the ferrule body includes a chamfer and the unground portion is disposed proximate the chamfer of the ferrule body.
- 37/44. (new) A ferrule comprising:
a ferrule body extending lengthwise between opposed front and rear faces to thereby define a longitudinal axis wherein the ferrule body defines a lengthwise extending bore capable of receiving an end portion of an optical fiber and a chamfer, the chamfer being adjacent to the front face, and the front face of the ferrule body includes a ground portion and an unground portion, wherein the bore opens through the ground portion.
- 38/45. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁷44, wherein the ground portion is rearward of the unground portion.
- 39/46. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁷44, wherein the unground portion is a plateau.
- 40/47. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁷44, wherein a plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.
- 41/48. (new) The ferrule according to claim ⁴⁰47, wherein the plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle of between about 8° and about 12° relative to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.
- 42/49. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁷44, wherein the unground portion extends across less than 50% of the front face of the ferrule body.
- 43/50. (new) The ferrule according to claim ³⁷44, wherein said ferrule body includes a chamber and the unground portion is disposed proximate to the chamber of the ferrule body.